

MINUTES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

December 8, 2016
Lansing Center
333 East Michigan, Lansing, MI 4893

Present for the Natural Resources Commission

John Matonich, chair
J.R. Richardson, vice-chair
Vicki Pontz
Rex Schlaybaugh
Christine Crumbaugh
Louise Klarr
Tim Nichols

Present for DNR staff

Keith Creagh, DNR director
Peter Manning, legal counsel, Office of the Attorney General
Dennis Knapp, DNR chief of staff
Stacy Welling Haughey, DNR Upper Peninsula Regional Coordinator
Cheryl Nelson, executive assistant to the NRC

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chairman John Matonich called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 2:17 p.m.

Parks and Trails Update Parks and Recreation division chief **Ron Olson** provided that recreation passport sales are up 1.3%, lodging reservations are up 22% over last year, and attendance for last year at Belle Isle eclipsed 4,000,000. ORV license sales are up 4.2%, trail permits are up 11.2%, and snowmobile permits are up 1.1%. Recent highlights include; Rockport State Park met with studio class from MSU's design curriculum who provided management guidance and that Bay City Recreation Area has a new collaborative task force to improve beach/lake access. **Olson** mentioned two acquisitions that are partnerships with Oakland county parks for ORV trails. The Iron Belle Trail subcommittee is getting ready to launch partnerships the day before trust fund grants were approved across the state for various areas of the trail.

Partnership with DNR/Saginaw County Parks Department Regional initiatives deputy **Marc Miller** and **Matt Lincoln**, grants coordinator from the Parks and Recreation division shared information on the partnership revitalizing a 330 acre site inside the city of Saginaw. This partnership meets the objective in the Michigan State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Blue Ribbon Panel report for revitalizing Michigan's urban areas. They are using the public lands strategy; focusing regionally, increasing collaboration and an increase of wildlife watching and recreational opportunity within 15 miles of the users' homes. There will be a Memorandum of Understanding for the county to operate the park as a county park. There will also be a partnership with The Nature Conservancy and Saginaw Community Foundation to create an endowment so that they are able to operate and use the funds for annual operations. **Lincoln**

talked about the features of the site noting that it offers much opportunity for wildlife habitat, the site views are scenic and it has over 3000 feet of Saginaw River frontage. He talked about the recreation opportunities including wildlife viewing, ecosystem habitat interpretation, this park is more nature interpretation and enjoyment. As part of the partnership, the department applied for a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant, which was approved a day earlier to begin the Phase I development at the park. **Director Creagh** added that **Miller** has provided great leadership in this effort.

Sustainable Forestry Marketing Strategy **Deb Begalle**, assistant chief of the Forest Resources division in partnership with the Marketing and Outreach division talked about the project Forest Resources division is undertaking to educate the public about sustained forestry. They are working with GÜD Marketing on this endeavor. A survey will be going out in January to find out what people know about public land, forest management and logging. Forestry will provide updates to the commission along the way.

Hunter Education Instructors 40 Year Awards Law Enforcement division (LED) chief **Gary Hagler** recognized **Mr. Gerald Moser** for forty plus years of service as a Hunter Education volunteer instructor. **Hagler** also recognized five other instructors who were unable to attend; **James Strasser, Roger Cook, Richard Cottrell, Richard Moskaitis, and Kenny Poellet.** **Hagler** also commended LED staff members who work with this program; **Tom Wanless, Rudy Lawrence, Peggy Ruby, Michelle Hedin, Steve Orange.**

Fisheries Division Strategic Plan Update Fisheries division chief **Jim Dexter** stated that they are in the fourth year of the five year plan. He added that they are mirroring Wildlife division's technique to complete the plan.

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Update **Steve DeBrabander**, Grants section manager for the Finance and Operation division provided an update on the recently announced grant recommendations from the Natural Resources Trust Fund Board; a total of 114 projects for \$47.6 million.

Outdoor Channel's Wardens Show Update **Tom Weston**, chief technology officer, from the Marketing and Outreach division briefed the commission on a partnership with the outdoor channel which produces the show, Wardens. He went on to say that each episode will showcase various aspects of the entire department. **Weston** shared that there will be 16 episodes which will be done using a local Michigan production company and that each episode will include at least three themes. The first show is set to air on February 6 regarding an illegal bear taken and will tie in with bear check stations and the diagnostics lab. **Hagler** added the show is about how Michigan's DNR works with stakeholders. **Creagh** added that it's a great opportunity to show what the department does in Michigan.

Scientific Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act **Peter Manning**, legal counsel from the Office of the Attorney General provided an overview regarding the statute which was challenged by the group called Keep Michigan Wolves Protected, that was upheld by court of claims and was recently struck down by court of appeals. The court found that one provision regarding price of a license for military was not sufficiently related to the other parts of the statute. We are currently in discussions on if we should pursue an appeal.

Legislative Report **Trevor VanDyke**, Legislative and Legal Affairs Office director, provided a written report of legislation related to the department. In addition to the written report, **VanDyke** provided updates on recent legislative highlights.

Safari Club International (SCI) – Michigan Involvement Committee **Bob Taylor**, Novi chapter president, stated that these prize winners are chosen by a random drawing, which are given annually to hunters who complete the department's annual deer harvest survey. **Taylor** presented a Ruger American rifle to **Raymond Wauters** of St. Clair Shores and **Rich DeLisle** from the Southeast Bowhunters Chapter of SCI presented the compound bow to **Dick Donker** from Grand Rapids.

Thomas L. Washington Lifetime Conservation Award **Mr. Dennis Muchmore** was chosen as this year's selection as the recipient of the NRC's Thomas L. Washington Lifetime Conservation Award. He was chosen for his commitment in making certain that the natural resources are protected by the use of sound science and biology. **Heidi Washington** added a few words saying that **Mr. Muchmore** was a great supporter of her father and was proud that he took over her father's work at MUCC. **Commissioners Nichols** and **Richardson** offered a few words of appreciation for **Mr. Muchmore's** dedication to the resources.

Committee Reports

NRC Policy Committee on Finance and Administration: **Commissioner Christine Crumbaugh** stated that they had an informative meeting on the Pittman-Robertson wildlife restoration fund, which received \$22.4 million in 2016, and the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish restoration fund as presented by Finance and Operations division chief **Sharon Schafer**.

Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee: **Commissioner Louise Klarr** stated that the morning's agenda included a presentation on Saginaw county parks, a master plan for McLain state park which has been heavily damaged by erosion. There were three action items; Tahquamenon Falls state park general management plan approval, Muskegon state park general management plan approval and a resolution to approve the policy on state water trail designations. The committee was also presented an update on the year in review. There was discussion on the issue regarding the use of centerfire firearms in state parks. They also received an update from the finance subcommittee.

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries: **Commissioner Rex Schlaybaugh** shared that the committee received updates from both Wildlife and Fisheries divisions. **Chief Dexter** reviewed regulations on the pike and musky, which are still being developed. They also discussed the increasing of the bag limit on brook trout from five to ten on Type 1 Upper Peninsula (UP) streams, with the exception of a limited number of specific streams. **Chief Mason** shared that the ninth chronic wasting disease (CWD) positive deer was found along the Grand River corridor. He also shared that he and Wildlife veterinarian **Kelly Straka** will be attending a meeting on December 16 in the UP to discuss CWD with the CWD workgroup. Lastly, the committee received a report on the 2016 deer season from **Chad Stewart**, which indicated deer harvest to be up in the UP thirty percent over 2015, down five to ten percent in the Northern Lower Peninsula and down 15 to 20 percent in the Southern Lower Peninsula.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES BEFORE THE NRC

(**Stacy Welling-Haughey** read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances, which began at 3:41 p.m.)

John Hunter came before the commission to speak about his concerns with licenses for fishing guides. He felt that some regulations are not being followed or regulated, specifically drinking and smoking while operating a fishing vessel. **Hunter** also stated that a person should not be allowed to get a fishing guiding license without taking a drug and alcohol test, and get a background check. He was informed that the commission does not have authority on commercial guiding.

Dale Hendershot, Michigan Trapper and Predator Callers Association (MTPCA) spoke about Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 11 of 2016 concerning the use of centerfire firearms at night. **Hendershot** is happy about the caliber that are being allowed and removal of the optics restrictions. Regarding hunter's safety, **Hendershot** said that the department's staff does an amazing job.

Ean Green spoke to the commission on the topic of a one buck rule petition in Michigan that he began and has over 11,000 signatures. He read his petition to the commission. **Green** stated that having a one buck rule would increase the satisfaction rate and will allow the hunter to determine which deer would be a trophy. He also stated that it encourages the hunter to harvest the antlerless deer. **Green** thinks this would balance the deer herd in Michigan.

Merle Jones, speaking on behalf of Michigan Predator Hunters for Centerfire at Night, talked about the geographic restrictions in the order. His group would like to see the order move forward and could live with those restrictions. This order will provide hunters the tools they need to remove coyotes. **Jones** thanked the commission for working with him over the past year.

George Quackenbush, president of the Michigan Cattlemen Association came to discuss the October 13, 2016 meeting minutes and the aggressive approach and the use of sharpshooters from USDA in the CWD zone. He also commented about the error in the minutes regarding the prevalence of bovine TB in the state. The minutes stated "cattle" when it should have been "deer." [The minutes were updated to reflect the correct wording, and were approved in the business portion of this meeting.] **Quackenbush** urged the commissioners to take an aggressive approach to managing TB in the core area, including strategic culling of deer in highest risk areas. He would like to see more transparency between the organizations. Thinks this needs to be handled immediately.

Drew Youngedyke, MUCC's chief information officer, discussed the centerfire at night issue. MUCC adopted a resolution to support centerfire at night with no restrictions. They fully support MTPCA's position with the caliber restrictions they agreed to. Regarding the regional restrictions, they have concerns with restricting it on public land particularly when it comes to game areas. Fishing and hunting should have precedence on the state game areas. There should be the same options as with private land. They fully support MTPCA's direction on this amendment.

Tony Smith, was representing the QDMA state council, stated that he has spoken to co-ops and sportsmen's groups around the state regarding let 'em go, let 'em grow program. He gave a brief synopsis on the history of deer hunting in Michigan. They would like to work with the commission to support antler point restrictions in Michigan.

Chairman Matonich adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting at 4:12 p.m. and called to order the regular meeting of the NRC at 4:13 p.m. He noted that all

commissioners who were present at the Committee of the Whole were present for the regular meeting.

REGULAR MEETING OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

Chairman Matonich stated that there was a correction made to the October 13, 2016 NRC meeting minutes. During **Dr. O'Brien's** presentation on bovine tuberculosis, the minutes reflected that "bovine TB was prevalent in cattle and that in 2015 that rate was 2.7%," the corrected version now reads, "He stated that it is mostly prevalent in deer and that in 2015 that rate was 2.7%." He asked for a motion to accept the corrected version of the October 13, 2016 minutes. **Commissioner Nichols** made a motion that the corrected minutes be approved. **Commissioner Pontz** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Nichols made a motion that the minutes of the November 10, 2016 NRC meeting be approved. **Commissioner Pontz** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Centerfire Firearms for Nighttime Raccoon, Opossum, Fox and Coyote Hunting, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 11 of 2016

Commissioner Schlaybaugh moved that Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 11 of 2016, Centerfire Firearms for Nighttime Raccoon, Opossum, Fox and Coyote Hunting be adopted. **Commissioner Crumbaugh** supported the motion. **Schlaybaugh** had two amendments; he moved to amend by striking 6.5 mm and inserting .269 caliber in sections 2.4 and 2.5. **Commissioner Klarr** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion on the amendment only, there being none, a vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. **Schlaybaugh** also moved to amend section 2.5, subsection (2) by inserting after "slug or cut shell" the clause "unless otherwise prohibited by law," and inserting the following language as a new subsection (3): "A person shall not use a centerfire firearm to take an animal during nighttime hunting hours as specified in subsection (2) in any state park or recreation area within the limited firearm deer zone, as defined in section 1.2, a person may use a centerfire firearm during nighttime hunting hours, as specified in subsection (2), only on private land." The remaining subsections are to be renumbered as needed. **Commissioner Nichols** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion to the amendment, **Commissioner Pontz** asked about recreation area and state game area clarification, what lands are actually being prohibited, only south of the shotgun zone it would only allow centerfire at night on private land, north of the shotgun line, it would be prohibited in state parks and recreation areas, not state game areas. **Matonich** asked for a vote on the amendment. A vote was taken, all commissioners with the exception of **Commissioner Crumbaugh** agreed to this amendment. The motion passes. **Matonich** called for discussion on the entire order as amended, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

FOR INFORMATION ONLY – DIRECTOR

Chairman Matonich read the items up "for information only" listed on the agenda.

DIRECTOR'S ACTION ITEMS

Director Creagh listed the "director's action" items on the agenda and indicated he would approve all items.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Pontz reminded everyone that they have until December 31, 2016 to apply for the Great Lakes Emerging Leader Program.

Commissioner Schlaybaugh spent time in the field deer hunting, and felt fortunate to have the opportunity in Michigan to enjoy the resources we have.

Commissioner Crumbaugh shared that last week she attended Michigan's Farm Bureau's annual banquet.

Commissioner Richardson said that he would be attending a CWD and UP Habitat workshops in the upcoming week and a bear stakeholder's meeting shortly thereafter. He attended a timber advisory committee meeting and they are planning a Governor's summit for next year. He made a motion on a resolution regarding the UP Brook Trout, in which the commission provides support to increase the bag limit to 10 per day on all Type 1 UP streams, with the exception of a limited number of specific streams provided by the DNR before July 1, 2017, which will take effect by the 2018 fishing season. **Commissioner Nichols** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion to adopt the resolution passed unanimously.

Commissioners Nichols had valuable time in the field deer hunting with his grandson. He thanked the DNR staff that worked at the Williamston CWD check station for their hard work. He also thanked **Ed Golder** for clearing up some false information that was posted to Facebook regarding deer check stations.

Next Meeting

Chairman Matonich announced that the next meeting of the NRC is scheduled for Thursday, January 12, 2017 at the MSU Diagnostic Center, 4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing. The committees meeting that day will be the NRC Marketing, Partnership, Youth and Outreach Advisory Committee and the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries.

Adjournment

Commissioner Nichols made a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Pontz** seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

APPROVED: Date: 11/12/17



John Matonich, NRC Chairman



Keith Creagh, DNR Director